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HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

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HISTORY  
OF THE  
NEW TESTAMENT,  
WITH A  
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH  
OF  
JESUS CHRIST.

*By* CORTES JACKSON.

"Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth."



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TO

My loved and venerable

Mother,

Whose sweet counsel for more than three-score  
years has cast a soft light along life's path-  
way, ever pointing onward and upward  
to that city whose builder and  
maker is God, this volume  
is affectionately in-  
scribed.

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BY THE AUTHOR.







## INTRODUCTION.

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SINCE the day that St. John held the pen of inspiration on the Isle of Patmos to the present, never has the spirit of inquiry been as active. Truly, men are running to and fro, seeking more light—particularly on matters of a religious character; men are eagerly looking this way and that seeking for light on the one, all absorbing theme of a future state. This spirit of inquiry may be seen animating the bright faces of children in our Sunday Schools.

Religion is bold enough to hold out the hand of honest investigation, and shrinks not from the most searching criticism. The Bible is the book that proposes to solve this, the most intricate of all problems; for this reason the Bible is subjected to a fiery ordeal from some of the most subtle and powerful minds of the age, but, thank God, His flaming sword is guarding His sacred word; the face of Moses shines as bright as when the brow of Sinai smoked as a furnace and a nation worshipped

at the feet of their Creator. The wisdom of Job throws a strong light on ancient literature; his integrity to God is soothing ten thousand bleeding hearts the world over. The clarion notes of Joshua's trumpet are shaking the walls of the Pagan world; the flame and smoke from Elijah's altar is typified in the hearts of enlightened nations. The Samsons are not all slumbering on the lap of Delilah, the spirit of David is in the field, the prophetic words of Isaiah are as immovable as the polar star, the wisdom of Solomon has lost none of its power, and the voice of Him who spake on the placid waters of Galilee as never man spake, and the scathing words of Peter who spoke in the presence of the Holy Spirit, the eloquent tongue of Paul, the fiery words of James, and John, the leading star of the world in sublime imagery—the combined wisdom of these matchless spirits constitute the beacon light of the grandest spirits of the age, and a grand army of men have this motto inscribed on their banner, "I am the light of the world," and the marching order of this invincible army is, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations."

The highest aim of a Christian's life should be to have his name enrolled in this army of the faithful, and ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.



## PREFACE.

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THE Apostle Paul writes to his s<sup>on</sup> Timothy, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." These words of the apostle have prompted me to gather some of the most prominent historical facts pertaining to the history of our New Testament, putting them in book form—hoping they will assist young persons to see the genuineness of the New Testament books—not knowing of a similar work for Sunday schools, and believing the words of God are in harmony with such work—Deut. vi. 7, "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up." The Saviour taught, "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Let us remember well the destiny of our


state and church will soon be committed to the hands of the children of the coming generation. This truth cannot be too firmly impressed on the hearts of those who love the words of Jesus, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." And the words of the apostle testify, "Where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." As we are walking in the sunshine of this blessed freedom may God help us to guard with a jealous eye the liberties of our children, remembering that, to a large extent, our public schools have been robbed of the Bible, and the children left to grope their way in moral darkness by a power that thinks no good of our religious liberty. This should force us to be the more determined to teach the Bible and Bible literature in our Sunday Schools that children may know the certainty of those things wherein they are instructed, remembering it is a Christian duty to "walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time."

As to the general arrangement of this work, it may not be all that could be desired, but I trust its simplicity and truthfulness will claim

for it an acceptable place in Sunday School literature.

I hope, giving the Apostle Peter a prominent position among those who compiled the New Testament will meet with thoughtful consideration from those who have not considered him in this line of work.

If this book becomes a favorite with that class of people who have neither time nor means to acquire such knowledge, I have obtained my reward.

 I hope, as far as practicable, teachers in Sunday Schools will introduce this as a *premium book*.





# History of the New Testament.

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No book has so firmly rooted itself in the heart of the American people as the New Testament Scriptures. In the innermost life of the American home its silent teachings have moulded the characters of the grandest and purest of our nation, by whose wisdom the tree of religious and political liberty has been enabled so to flourish that nations are crowding to seek a home under the shadow of its branches. The Bible, by its fruits, has forced the infidel to admit it is the book of Christian civilization; and shall I hesitate to spread before the children of our Sunday Schools a history of our New Testament? Surely they are entitled to such knowledge, as large numbers are devout Christians. God being my help, they shall have a few historical facts, easily understood, and which no man will gainsay. In commencing, it will simplify the work to submit a few questions.

i. How many books are there in the New Testament?

2. By whom were they written?
3. Who selected the books?
4. At what time was the work done?
5. By what rule was the selection guided?
6. About what time was the work completed?
7. How were the books preserved?

To answer these questions plainly, seems to be a duty imposed on Christians by the words of the apostle, Col. iv.: "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." The first question is briefly answered by stating that the New Testament is composed of twenty-seven books.

The second question is easily disposed of by saying, from the most reliable testimony, it is admitted that they were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, James, Peter and Jude.

Before answering the third query, it will not be without interest to notice a few things pertaining to these books. They were written at different times; often the writers were wide apart. Matthew wrote while in Judea;

Mark, in Rome; Luke, in Greece; John, in Ephesus; Paul, in Corinth. Some were written to churches, others to individuals; not unfrequently they were written under the most trying circumstances, as the Apostle Paul wrote chained in prison, weeping. Most of these writers were illiterate; but Luke was a physician and a learned man. Paul's writings reveal the greatness of his natural and acquired abilities. On undisputed authority it appears about the close of the first century a number of historical books of the character of Matthew, Luke and John had been written, setting forth the life, doctrine, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ of Bethlehem of Judea, and a great many epistles written by the Apostles and other Christians on matters relating to the building up of the churches. Possibly one hundred and fifty books of this character at this time might have been found deposited in chests belonging to the older churches—Jerusalem, Ephesus, Rome and others. How the work of examining and testing these books, selecting those of a divine character, and rejecting others, and by

whom this work was commenced, should be shown clearly and certainly. The Apostle Paul justifies this position in his defence before King Agrippa: "I speak freely; for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from Him, for this thing was not done in a corner." In one of his epistles he testifies that Christ was seen at one time after his resurrection of about five hundred brethren. "After that he was seen of James; then of all the Apostles."

The apostles sought not out of the way places, neither did they confine their manifestations of supernatural power to the rabble, but preferred large cities, the centers of power and learning, and shrank not from the presence of philosophers, statesmen and rulers of nations. That many had in the times of the apostles written concerning Christ and His doctrine, may be inferred from reading the first chapter of Luke, "For as much as many have taken in hand to set in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, it seemed good to me to write unto thee in order, most excellent The-

ophilus." Probably this was written before A. D. 60. Luke warrants the conclusion that many of those historical books had been written at this early date. In the fifteenth chapter of the book of Acts it is recorded that letters were written by the church in Jerusalem and sent to the brethren in Antioch Syria and Cilicia by the hands of Barnabas and Paul about the year A. D. 52. When these epistles were read the brethren rejoiced. In the Apostle Paul's letter to the Colossians he requests that his epistle be read to the Laodiceans. These books and epistles were written on vellum or parchment made from the skins of goats or sheep, prepared for the purpose. When not in use they were rolled up and deposited in a chest, kept in the church for such purposes, and carefully guarded. Such was the practice of the early Jews. What Moses received of God he was commanded to write in a book. Ex. xvii., 14. "And Moses instructed the Levites to take the book of the law and put it in the side of the Ark of the Covenant." Deut. xxxi., 26.

To show that such was the custom of the

early churches, we give a quotation from a writer of note who lived in the Second century, Marcion, who says that the gospels came down "from the very beginning" and "from the apostles," and had been kept as a sacred deposit in churches planted by the personal labors of the apostles. The practice of sending epistles from one church to another, we have shown from Paul's letter to the Colossians; by such practice the early churches became familiar with the writings and teachings of each other. This fact is plainly taught by the following words of the Apostle Peter, "Even as our beloved Brother Paul, also, according to the wisdom given him, hath written to you; as also in all his epistles." In those days the apostles often traveled from one church to another, "and when they had preached the gospel to that city and had taught many, they returned again to Lystria and to Iconium and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples."

In those days of trial and persecution the churches felt they were bound together by a common cause, as they had a common enemy. To encourage them they received special words

from the Holy Spirit. Such words are found in Acts, "The Holy Spirit said, separate me, Barnabus and Saul." Often they were animated by a love of independence, as Paul declares in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, that he, "laboring night and day because he would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God." In these days of poverty, toil and bitter persecution, books and epistles continued to accumulate in the churches. No doubt this fact arrested the attention of the apostles. Possibly as early as the year 50, they began to realize the truth that so many books would lead to confusion, errors and probably divisions. The question would naturally come up, are all these books to be accepted in the churches as the word of God? Should not these books be carefully examined by competent authority? Did not the words of the Saviour furnish this power? He had taught the apostles that the Holy Spirit should teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever He had said to them. Again He taught: When the spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all

truth. Did not this teaching foreshadow the future work of the Apostles? Were they not careful to follow the instructions of the Holy Spirit, that the apostles considered it a part of their mission to put whatever they had taught the churches in writing, that they might be kept for the use of the church in future ages.

This may be gathered from the Second Epistle of Peter, "Moreover, I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance;" from the words of the Saviour to Peter, "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." At another time He spoke to him in this wise, "Feed my sheep; feed my lambs." From such scripture would not the eyes of the apostles and the church be turned to Peter as the man to commence one of the most important works ever committed to the hands of the primitive church, namely, the selecting of those books that should be received in the church as the word of God in all ages to come? Were not the apostles with him on the day of Pentacost, when he



nobly began this work by standing up in the presence of the Holy Spirit and preaching Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and proclaimed His triumphant resurrection? And a few years after who but Peter, in the face of his Jewish brethren, had the boldness to preach free salvation to Jew and Gentile, testifying, "of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him?" Also, on reading his words as recorded in his Second Epistle, "Even as our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you in all his Epistles." Here are the Epistles of Paul spoken of by Peter, and their wisdom admitted from this time to the present. Have not the Epistles of Paul been generally admitted as a part of God's word? With these facts before us, can we reasonably draw any other conclusion than that the Apostle Peter commenced the work of selecting those books which compose our New Testament?

Is it not pleasant to realize that Peter, for more than eighteen centuries, has been feed-

ing the lambs of God with the bread of life?

All are willing to admit that Peter was guided by the Holy Spirit, and wrote his epistles about the year 60. If the conclusion reached is not at fault, it shows that the work of compiling the New Testament was begun as early as A. D. 60. From the best history we have, this work was continued for more than forty years by the Apostles, fathers and elders of the churches, in a work of such vital importance to the perpetuity of the church and salvation of men. I believe good men are ready to admit those men were guided by the light of God's word, and upheld by the power of His Holy Spirit; and no doubt the following words of Jesus were like bright clouds by day and a pillar of fire by night: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." Possibly these words were constantly before those holy men, as a rule to guide them in this work; and those sacred books and Epistles that possessed the power to enlighten the mind and quicken the heart, imparting a

spiritual life, were accepted as God's word. This was divine testimony, and no other than the work of the Holy Spirit. Such books were not slow in taking a deep and lasting hold on the hearts and lives of individuals, rapidly gaining power over one congregation and another, confirming the truth that they were the words of the Holy Spirit. In testimony whereof, the Apostle James writes: "Of His own will begat us with the word of truth." This grand work of the Spirit went on quietly; no confusion, no strife, but swiftly from church to church. Their power was felt in the various churches of the first century. Scattered abroad in many countries, those books which make up the New Testament were chosen as God's word. Those books that failed to enlighten the mind and impart a spiritual life were neglected and rapidly went out of use, and but very few have survived to the present time. Remember, up to this time history furnishes no account of the convening of a general council of the various churches for the purpose of deciding what books or Epistles should be accepted as the

word of God, and what books should be rejected; but, as shown above, this important work was quietly performed by good and faithful men, guided by the word and spirit of the Lord.

From reliable history it is probable that prior to the year A. D. 50, quite a number of the New Testament books were in use among the churches. It is generally admitted that the Apostle John lived to about the close of the First century; and if we conclude that at this time all of our sacred books were received in the churches as divine, we cannot be far from the truth. Possibly John may have been familiar with most of them.

To show that the books of the New Testament were written and received as God's word in the First century, we will introduce the testimony of men of undoubted character, who wrote in the Second, Third and Fourth centuries. It has been said, as pertaining to the history of the church of the Second century, Polycarp stands pre-eminent. He was born about the year A. D. 58, and very early in life became a member of the church, prob-

ably when about fifteen years old. "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth."

From reliable church history it is reasonable to believe that he had "conversed with many who had seen Christ," and that "he was instructed by Apostles." For many years he was Bishop of the church in Smyrna. It is stated that he was a disciple of the Apostle John about the close of the First century. He was a man of character and standing among the churches that had been planted by the Apostles. This gave him the best of opportunity of being acquainted with their writings. He wrote a number of epistles to the different churches; one of these, written to the church in Philippi, has been preserved. It was written about the year 115. In this he alludes to Paul's Epistle to the same church, and exhorting the brethren to observe its teachings. He makes frequent quotations from the historic books of Matthew, Luke and Mark, making liberal quotations from Acts, most of Paul's Epistles, and one of Peter's; sometimes quoting almost entire chapters. These facts, coming from a man who had

been taught by an Apostle, is undoubted testimony that those books were in use in the churches in his time as books written by the authority of the Holy Spirit. Such a conclusion stands firm to the present day.

Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, about 176, wrote that he had seen and talked with Polycarp. "I can tell the place in which the blessed Polycarp sat and taught, and his going out and coming in, and the manner of his life; how he related his conversation with John and others who had seen the Lord; all which Polycarp related agreeably to the Scriptures." This godly man ended his life at a martyr's stake about the year 155.

The second person we call attention to is Clement of Alexandria, born about the year 166; a man of learning, whose influence was felt over a large portion of the civilized world. From the writings of Eusebius, it appears that Clement speaks of Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews as being written in Hebrew, and translated by Luke into the Greek. Quite a number of his writings are extant. From these we can gather every name of the New

Testament books, except three or four of the Epistles. Eusebius testifies that he made no regular catalogue of New Testament books, but he gave an explanation of them all, which is equivalent.

The next person is Tertullian of Carthage, a man of great influence in the churches of Africa. He wrote about the close of the Second century. He testifies that in his time there was a Latin version of the New Testament current in Africa; on sifting carefully the testimony of these three eminent men, may not the conclusion be a safe one, that at the close of the Second century all the principal books of the New Testament were current all over the civilized world as the works of the authors to whom we still ascribe them? Tertullian was the one to give this collection of books the title of the New Testament.

In order to correct an erroneous impression, which has gained a foothold in the minds of many good people, permit us to make the following statements: According to church history, about 364, a large number of churches met in council in Laodicea; and, some thirty-

three years after, a similar council convened in Carthage, largely represented by churches in Africa. Remember, the object of those councils was not for the purpose of deciding what books should be received by the churches, and what should be rejected; nothing of this nature was attempted. Their main object appears to have been to confirm in use those sacred books which had been handed down to the churches by the fathers. (Those fathers were the apostles, elders and early disciples, who had gained positions of notoriety in the church by their godly work.) Please bear in mind, in those councils no attempt was made to vote any of the books of the New Testament into position or out of position, into power or out of power, as a vote is usually taken; but many years before those councils convened, those books which compose our New Testament had gained their places in the hearts, and their power over the lives of the early Christians, as has been stated above.

It will be of interest to the young reader to give a few items concerning the council which



met in Carthage about A. D. 397. It was composed of the bishops of the African churches in the Roman province of that name. This council recorded the names of the books of the New Testament in the following order: "Four books of the Gospels, one book of Acts of Apostles, thirteen Epistles of the Apostle Paul, one of the same to the Hebrews, two Epistles of the Apostle Peter, three of John, one of James, one of Judas, one book of the Apocalypse of John." In conclusion, the council states: "We have received from our fathers that these are to be read in the churches." Please notice these words—no voting, no effort to place any book into position or out, but confirming the use of those books received and in use by the fathers of the churches.

In connection with what has been said, will not the words of Paul be in place—1 Cor. xv. 3: "For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I received; how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; after that He was seen of about five

hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present; after that He was seen of James, then of all the Apostles; last of all He was seen of me." Remember, this is Paul's testimony, written while he was in Philippi, about twenty-seven years after the crucifixion of Christ. About three years after this the Apostle Peter, writing from Babylon, testifies, 11 Pet., i:16, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of His Majesty." Peter declares that he has written these things, that after his decease the brethren might always have them in remembrance. These words of Peter are worthy of note; that his testimony should be kept in remembrance in all ages by the churches. Is not this satisfactory evidence that, about the close of the Fourth century, all the books of our New Testament were in use as "Divine Scriptures," and had been held in high esteem by the "Fathers" of the venerable Bishops who sat in this council? And they testify that these books had been in use so

long as to be regarded by them as having proceeded from the Apostles. It will be of interest to state that Athanasius of Alexandria, a noted Greek writer, who wrote about A. D. 340, gives a list of the New Testament books, which is the same as we have. He declares that those who had been "eye witnesses and ministers of the Word" had delivered these to the fathers.

Eusebius, who wrote the first church history that has come down to our day, flourished in the close of the Third century. He is called the father of church history. It appears he was Bishop of the church in Cæsarea. He lived in the time of a severe persecution, which took place in the year 305 of Diocletian, a Roman emperor, when all the books of the Sacred Scriptures were commanded to be burned. This shows that at this early date the Christian Scriptures were well known to the heathen world, and in use all over the Roman empire.

Origen, one of the most eminent Greek writers of the early church, wrote early in the Third century. His book against Celsus,

written in defense of Christianity, is considered one of the most noted books of antiquity. In this book he gives a complete catalogue of the New Testament books.

In summing up the testimony of these eminent men, we have traced the existence of the books of our New Testament to the second generation after that of the Apostles, and at that time they were widely circulated over the world as Apostolic writings, and they testify they had received these books from their fathers, who had received them from the contemporaries of the Apostles. About the close of the Second century the books of the New Testament were in such demand that they were translated into other languages. This fact shows that the doctrine taught in these sacred books had created a deep interest in the heart of other nations beside the Jews, and this was done in the face of powerful enemies.

Having briefly given a few of the leading facts concerning the history of the twenty-seven books of our New Testament down to about the close of the Fourth century, is it

not one of the most remarkable facts in the history of the church that about this time God, in His wisdom, had a complete copy of the Bible, including the books of the New Testament, written in Greek? The church lost all knowledge of the existence of these books for over 1,500 years; then He directs the steps of that good man Tischendorf to the foot of Mount Sinai, and brings to the light of the world the most valuable of Biblical treasures—the Sinaitic manuscript. Surely the steps of the good man are ordered by the Lord.

How these sacred books were preserved and handed down from one generation to another, dating from the council in Carthage, A. D. 397, to the date of Tyndales—translation more than a thousand years—is of deep interest to the church, and can be studied with profit by young Christians.

In the Fourth century Damasus, Bishop of Rome, applied to a man noted for his great learning and piety, at that time living in Bethlehem of Judea, by the name of Eusebius Heronimus, better known to his

tory as St. Jerome, to give a faithful version of the New Testament. After much patient toil he completed a noble work in A. D. 385; and possibly it would be safe in concluding that he used many manuscripts written in the last days of the Apostles. His version acquired the title of Vulgate, or common version. It has been written: "No other work has had such influence on the history of the Bible. For more than a thousand years it was the parent of every version of the Scriptures in Western Europe, and its influence is quite perceptible on our authorized version." And let it be remembered, that from the date of this Latin vulgate to the time that John Wickliffe made his translation into the English, was a period of almost a thousand years, which is spoken of in history as the Dark Ages. Remember, in all this dark period, through the use of this Latin vulgate, God raised up good and faithful men, who contended earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the Saints. It was a period when ignorance and vile superstition had the controlling influence over the nations of Europe,

and the word of God was sought by kings and priests—not that they might learn the way of truth, but destroy it from the face of the earth. While nations and kingdoms rose and crashed against each other, fell in ruin and passed away forever, God kept an eye over His sacred word. In His own good time He put it into the heart of His faithful servant, Wm. Tyndale, for the first time to translate His word from ancient Greek manuscripts into England's native tongue. Remember, John Wickliffe had made his translation about one hundred years before, from the Latin vulgate, but few copies were put in circulation, as it was before the art of printing had been invented. Tyndales' translation was the first New Testament printed in the English language, which was completed in 1526. This was but the dawn of a brighter and more glorious day for England. It will be interesting to the young reader to learn through what trials and dangers Tyndale had to pass in order to accomplish his grand work. While collecting his Greek manuscripts, on a certain occasion, he made this noble declara-

tion: "If God spare me I will one day make the boy that drives the plough in England to know more of the Scriptures than the Pope does." At this time the art of printing had become a success, and he had determined that England should have the word of God spread among her people, if it should cost him his life. The Pope was his bitter enemy, and England was not his friend. He was compelled to flee into Germany, where the cold winds of poverty pinched him sorely; but the Lord was with him, and helped him to collect a sufficient number of manuscripts to complete his work. Remember, all the earlier English versions were but translations of a translation, being derived from the Vulgate or older Latin versions. Tyndale is the first to go back to the original Hebrew and Greek, seeking for the truth. He embodied that in so noble a translation, that no improvement of great importance has been made to the present day. "Every succeeding version is in reality little more than a revision of Tyndale's; and it has been remarked, that our authorized version owes to him chiefly the



ease and beauty for which it is so admired." Mr. Froude says, "The peculiar genius which breathes through the English Bible, the mingled tenderness and majesty, the Saxon simplicity, the grandeur, unequaled, unapproached in the attempted improvements of modern scholars—all are here bearing the impress of the mind of one man, and that man Wm. Tyndale."

We have hastily followed the history of the New Testament from the year A. D. 64—about the time Peter wrote his Epistle—to the printing of Tyndale's translation in 1526, a long period of more than thirteen centuries; and surely those who pause and reflect over this dark period of the world's history, will be deeply impressed with the wonderful oversight that God has over His sacred word, realizing the words of the Apostle, "The Heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth, also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up; but the word of the Lord endureth forever." In this troublesome period thousands of valuable books were lost, to ap-

pear among men no more forever. God's word emerged from this gloom to shine in the hearts of men with all its wonted power, and to-day the world can behold nations walking in all the splendor of God's inspiration. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."

A few more items will bring us down to our standard version. First, remember the early copies of the New Testament were not divided into chapters and verses, as at present; the division into chapters was made in 1248, and into verses about 1551. The number of the verses were placed in the margin. This division of the chapters into verses was recognized by the Geneva Bible, which was a most excellent work, made and published in Geneva about 1559, by a company of English scholars who, like Tyndale, on account of bitter persecution, had fled from England and made their home in Geneva. This was the first copy of the New Testament to use italics for all words not occurring in the original. About the year 1633, a small edition was published in Holland, in which the verses were marked by

breaks in the texts, (and not by numbers in the margin.) This form has been adopted in our standard version, often at the expense of the sense of the text.

In order that we may appreciate the motive which led King James of England, in 1604, to consider the matter of a new version, which led to our standard version, it will be necessary to briefly state the religious condition of England at that time. There were three versions of the Bible in use among the people, each reaching out for popular favor. The Geneva was rather the favorite of the people at large—a rival version known as the Bishop's Bible, which was supported by ecclesiastic authority; while the great Bible of Henry VIII. might have been seen chained to stone or wooden desks in many of the rural churches. The tendency of these rival versions was to foster a feeling of variance among the people. With such surroundings King James thought, very wisely, the best thing to do was to call together a company of fifty-four men noted as scholars, men of high standing, and a few men not connected with

religious party, but noted for great learning. With this company, after years of honest toil, King James was enabled to give to England, in the year 1611, a grand version of God's word, which, for more than two hundred years, has been the leading power of Christian civilization. This is how we have obtained the New Testament that we hold in our hands to-day, and millions of our race are enjoying the same blessing. We shall thank the Lord if this short history will enable the Christian to give a reasonable answer to the question of, How did we obtain the New Testament?

Believing it will be acceptable to a large majority of readers, we shall briefly give a history of the new version in connection with this. It will not be out of the way to pay some attention to three important manuscripts that were counted worthy of careful attention by the revisers. One of the most important of these manuscripts is that of the Vatican. It is generally considered to be the most ancient of the three; by some writers it is believed to be over fifteen hundred years

old. It is the property of the Roman Catholic Church, and is deposited in the Pope's library in Rome, and is usually spoken of as the Vatican manuscript. On account of its great age, and other reasons, it is held in very high esteem by Bible scholars; but on account of its not being a complete copy of the New Testament, its value is limited, as a number of entire chapters are wanting. It has seven hundred leaves of fine vellum, about one foot square, bound together in book form; the writing is perfectly clear and legible after a lapse of fifteen hundred years; each page contains three columns, and the writing is in capital letters, without any division between the words. This was done at a time when writing material was scarce and expensive. This manuscript has been in the Vatican about five hundred years.

The Sinaitic is the next we call attention to. It has been given this name on account of the place where it was discovered by Dr. Tischendorf, a German scholar who spent many years of his life in hunting up ancient Bible manuscripts. It is written in Greek,

and contains most of the books of the Old Testament and all of the New *complete*, making it the most valuable of all manuscripts; written on fine vellum, containing 790 pages, about thirteen inches wide and full fourteen long. Trusting that it will add interest to our work, we will give a short account of its discovery, which was accomplished in 1859, by Dr. Tischendorf, the great German scholar, who spent the most of his life in the study of ancient manuscripts of the Bible. He traveled all over the east, searching every old library he could get access to, often under very trying circumstances. In the year 1844, he visited a convent situated at the foot of Mount Sinai. On examining the library of the convent, in a hall, he noticed a basket full of old parchments. What was his surprise to find a number of sheets of the Septaugent (Greek) Old Testament, the most ancient-looking manuscripts he had ever seen. With these valuable sheets he returned to Germany. In 1853, he made another visit to the convent, but without making any new discovery. But, not willing to give up his search for the truth,

in 1859, again he made his appearance at the foot of that sacred mountain where Moses received from the hand of God that law which has become the guiding star of the civilized world. This time he came with commendations from the Czar of Russia. One evening, walking with the steward of the convent, the monk asked him into his cell to take some refreshments. Scarcely had they entered the cell, when he took down a bundle wrapped in red cloth. Tischendorf opened the parcel and found, not only those fragments that he had seen fifteen years before, but also other parts of the Old Testament—the New Testament complete. He says: "I knew that I held in my hand one of the most precious Biblical treasures in existence, a document whose age and importance exceeded that of any I had ever seen, after twenty years' study of the subject." Through the influence of the officials of the Greek Church, after much difficulty, he finally succeeded in obtaining the manuscript for the Imperial Library, at St. Petersburg. After all his toils and trials, about the month of November, 1859, he had



the pleasure of presenting it to the Czar of Russia, and to-day it is the property of the Greek Catholic Church, safely stored in the Library of St. Petersburg.

How significant that God should select this sacred mountain where, more than 3,000 years ago, He appeared in all His grandeur, and gave to His servant, Moses, His written law! Surely it was a suitable place to keep His Holy Word for fifteen hundred years, while nations and kingdoms have passed away forever, that His children of to-day might read its sacred pages.

The Alexandrian manuscript has 793 leaves, and two columns to the page. It is not a complete copy of the New Testament, as more than twenty chapters of the book of Matthew are wanting, and parts of other books are missing. It is safely deposited in the British Museum as the property of the English nation. It was presented to King Charles I. of England, by Cyril Lucar, Bishop of Constantinople, in 1628; possibly, it is some 1,400 years old.

Is it not rather remarkable that the three



great manuscripts just described, the most important known, are in possession of three great religious bodies of the world? It will be seen that the men who gave to the world the new version, had many advantages over those who gave us the standard version; the new version is the combined work of thirty-five scholars in Europe and fifteen in America. In this company seven denominations were represented; the first edition was published in England and America in May, 1881. This is how we obtained our new version, which has been printed by millions. Surely, the time is not far in the future when the knowledge of God's word will cover the face of the earth as the waters do the mighty deep.

By some persons it is claimed that the Sinaitic manuscript gave no new light to the authors of the new version. If this be true, does it imply that it was of no value? Not by any means, no one will call in question its value in more ways than one, as some have concluded that it confirmed the truthfulness of some matters around which for years there had lingered a feeling of uncertainty; and its

value to the church at large will never be overestimated. In its mission to the church of to-day, it stands as the councils of Laodicea and Carthage stood to the early churches—as those councils confirmed the sacred books then in use—as those books which had been handed down to the churches by the Apostles and elders as the word of God. In the preserving of this manuscript the wisdom of God is manifested; here is a complete copy of the New Testament, written more than 1,500 years ago, every word in it clear and distinct, and in all the leading truths of our holy religion, agreeing with the translation made by St. Jerome in A. D. 385, and Wm. Tyndale, in 1526, and King James, in 1611, and the new version, in 1881, confirming to the world that God had His Word faithfully taught in all these ages.

# CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

## OF THE

# NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS.

---

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Mark, " Rome	64
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II. Peter, " Rome	65
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# QUESTIONS

FOR

## Sunday School Work.

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2	Who are the authors? .....	10
3	Were they learned men? .....	11
4	When was the first Epistle written? .....	13
5	On what were they written? .....	13
6	Where were they kept? .....	13
7	Was this the practice of the Jews? .....	13
8	Were the Epistles sent to churches? .....	13
9	How many books and Epistles were there at the close of the First century? ..	11
10	Who began compiling the New Testament? .....	17
11	When was the work completed? .....	20
12	By whom was the work done? .....	18
13	What words of Christ influenced them? ..	18
14	Was it the work of men? .....	19
15	When was Polycarp born? .....	20
16	What does he say of the New Testament? .....	21
17	What does Irenæus say of Polycarp? ..	22
18	What is said of Clement? .....	22
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20	What church council convened in 397? ..	24
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31	What copy of the New Testament was written about the close of the Fourth century?-----	29
32	How long was it hidden away?-----	29
33	In what language was it written? -----	29
34	In the Fourth century, what noted trans- lation was made?-----	30
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No.	QUESTION.	PAGE
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48	What Bible was the first to accept this division?-----	34
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## A Biographical Sketch of Our Saviour.

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IN this brief sketch we shall attempt to bring together a few of the leading facts as given by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. As a historian, Luke stands in the front rank, and in the second chapter he relates many interesting facts that are omitted by the others. In the seventh verse, the humble birth of the Christ is given with a truthful simplicity; and in the eleventh verse, for the first time, His birth is proclaimed in the beautiful language of the angel to the shepherd: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." And there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God. And from Matthew ii. 9, we learn that a star guided the shepherds to where Jesus was born. And Herod the king, wishing to see Christ, Joseph being warned by an angel, took the young child with his mother, and fled into Egypt, where they remained until the death of the

king. After this they returned to the land of Israel and dwelt in the city of Nazareth. Luke gives us all the information we have concerning the childhood days of the Saviour in Luke ii. 40: "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him." In the forty-second verse we are told he went up to Jerusalem with his parents, and was twelve years old, and when his parents had completed their mission, after they had been a day's journey on their way home, they noticed the child Jesus had tarried at Jerusalem. When they found him not in their company, they returned and found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

In this brief narrative the Saviour manifests a strength of mind remarkable for one so young in years. No wonder that he developed into the grandest teacher of our race. How strange of all the words of wisdom that he spoke in his youthful days, but one brief sentence is placed

on record. Luke records he said to his parents: "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Did not the Saviour, in this brief expression, foreshadow the grand mission of the redemption of our race, which his Father had given him to work out? And we are told that he went down with his parents to Nazareth, and was subject unto them. In this we have a lesson of love and duty to parents, taught for the children of all ages. From this time on we learn that "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

By the Jews Joseph was looked upon as the father of Christ, and by occupation Joseph was a carpenter. It was the custom among the Jews for the son to follow the occupation of the father. We learn from Mark vi. 3: "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?" Here we have a faithful picture of a family consisting of parents, sisters and four brothers, in which Jesus lived and toiled until

he was about thirty years old. And about this time John came, Luke iii. 3: "Came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." And we learn from Mark i. 9: "Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptised of John in Jordan," and a voice came from heaven saying: "Thou art my beloved Son;" and in verse thirteen: "He was there in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him." What the nature of this sore conflict with Satan and the wild beasts of the desert was, will remain forever unknown. It may be that the ministration of the angels consisted in giving him power to resist the wiles of the devil, and protect him from wild beasts.

Immediately after his temptation in the wilderness, as recorded in Luke iv., a remarkable conversation took place between him and Satan. Jesus being now about thirty years of age, for the first time he enters the grand arena of the world as a public teacher of our fallen race. In his public teaching, his man-

ner was as one having authority—his doctrine so remarkable that those who heard him were astonished. Often his words were as kind and gentle as those of a mother. “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” “Jesus said unto her, ‘neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more.’” In reproving sin, his words were sharp and pointed: “Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.” “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father ye will do.” Where can words be found so pure and elevating as the following, that have the power to enlighten the mind, refine the heart, and cast a light along life’s pathway, ever with an upward tendency, until the enraptured soul has caught a glimpse of the eternal world? “I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” “God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit

and in truth." Are not these the words of inspiration?

We learn from Luke that the custom was to enter the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and to stand up and read. When he came to the city of Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he read from the book of Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Here the Saviour introduces himself to his brethren as a teacher sent from God, and for his authority the word of God as spoken by the prophet Isaiah; and to their astonishment he declares: "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

The leading facts have been briefly narrated in the life of Jesus Christ as given in the four books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, from his birth to his baptism, and his coming before the world as a public teacher; and I

am not sure it would be in keeping with the mission of our work to follow the Saviour in all his work and labor of love to his death on the cross (which took place when he was about thirty three years of age), for they are faithfully narrated in God's word so plain that a wayfaring man need not err therein. We have closely studied economy, that we may be able to offer this book so that all may be enabled to buy and read it; for it has the power to kindle upon the altar of the human heart a fire that shall burn forever. And that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, I will add the following: The Apostle Peter says: "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you." The Saviour, once on a time, asked the question: "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" In this age of inquiry, how often do Christians have this question asked by men of intelligence: "If there lived 1,800 years ago such a man as Jesus Christ, as you Christians affirm, I should like to have some testimony from ancient history



not found in the Bible?" We learn from Grecian and Roman history that about the time our Saviour came, there was a general expectation that some remarkable person would make his appearance. And that such a person did appear, and that he taught a strange doctrine, and performed wonderful works that no man could account for, is attested by the following witnesses: Caius Cornelius Tacitus, who was prætor of Rome about the year A. D. 88; as a historian and writer he stands high; Celcus, the famous Epicurean philosopher, lived about the year A. D. 173; Porphyry, who flourished about the year A. D. 270, wrote many books, and some were against Christianity; Julian the Apostate, as he is styled by some, because at one time he embraced Christianity, and afterwards apostatized, and wrote some seven books against Christianity.

In keeping with the mission of our work we are only allowed to make a summary of the testimony of the writings of these eminent men. Some of these persons held high positions under the Roman government. Such



testimony will hardly be called in question by persons of intelligence. We will name a few gleaned from their writings: *First*—In the reign of Augustus Cæsar there was born in Judea, Jesus, who is called the Messiah. *Second*—On account of persecution, he was, by his parents, taken into Egypt, and shortly returned to Judea. *Third*—That Jesus, who is called Christ, was publicly executed at Jerusalem as a criminal while Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Tiberius emperor of Rome. *Fourth*—The genuineness of the four Gospels and book of Acts. *Fifth*—Many things concerning the manners, doctrine and worship of the primitive Christians are distinctly named.

For the benefit of those who think they are guided by reason, and call in question the truth of the Bible, permit me to invite their attention to this fact: We know it has pleased God to respect our reasoning faculties, for He saith in His word, "Come, let us reason together, saith the Lord." For this cause He has pleased to rest the proof of the truth of His revelation upon matters of fact.

This brings the demonstration within the reign of evidence. Now, what class of men make it their business to deal with evidence? The legal profession. The head of this profession in England is the Lord Chancellor. Is it not a remarkable truth that the three last Lord Chancellors have been deeply religious men? Now, who will say that such men, whose reasoning faculties have been trained to the highest state—men who are not committed to a profession which requires certain belief, but who are lawyers; that these men would accept the truth of Christianity with blind unreason, would be absurd. They only believe because they know. Here is, then, a safe foundation for less favored people. Now if such master-minds as the last Prime Minister of England, who is one of the most erudite men living; and some of the most profound lawyers of our own country, who have given time and thought to sift the evidence upon which the truth of Christianity rests, have concluded the evidence is sufficient, that the reasoning is sound, the conclusion firm, then is it not reasonable and safe for us

to accept the truth they have proven for us, and say the word of God is true and abideth forever? The Bible is that word.

*"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in men."*

*"For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven."*



## APPENDIX.

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On looking over the History of the New Testament, the conclusion is sustained that it is a part of the Bible, as much of its doctrine—which is of such vital importance to the Christian world—is received directly from the Old Testament. Christ and his apostles quote largely from its sacred pages.

Believing it will be appreciated by young persons, we invite attention to some truths that are of profound interest to those who feel an interest in a future state. God has been pleased, in His wisdom, to reveal these things to man step by step, as he became able to bear the light. God saw that it was good so to teach man for more than three thousand years, until He had elevated him to that state where “he heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for man to utter.” The Bible gives this revelation by teaching man, *First*—That in the beginning God hath created all things, upholding all by the might of His

power. *Second*—That there is but one true and living God; that He hath appeared and communed face to face with man. *Third*—That there are spiritual beings called angels. *Fourth*—God himself is a spirit. *Fifth*—That after the death of this natural body man will enter a spiritual world, where he will live eternally. *Sixth*—That God reveals Himself to man as a being of reason, and man possessing the same power. “Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord.” In doing this he manifests himself as the Son of God clothed with a mortal body, to be tempted, tried and suffer in all respects as a man, and yet without sin. Through His perfect life He offers eternal life to all who will love and obey Him, revealing Christ as the author of eternal salvation. How elevating the thought of man and his Creator communing together, his reasoning faculties giving him the power to understand these revelations which he so earnestly desires. The Bible raises the curtain of the unseen world, revealing God in a spiritual world surrounded by a host of spiritual beings clothed in pure white,

in a state of blissful enjoyment. These beings God is pleased to call angels; and the light of this world is the countenance of the living God. This world is called Heaven, and all who will love and obey God are promised a home in this beautiful world after the toils, cares and sufferings of this life have ended; yea, that the highest idea of human happiness shall be realized, namely—that father, mother, brother and sister and friends are invited to meet and dwell together with God and angels. This is the problem of human life solved upon a bright and glorious plan, reason confirming, amen, amen.

The Bible reveals another state in the unseen world, which is a state of outer darkness, and is presided over by an evil being, whose name is Satan; and those who enter this state on account of evil deeds committed while in the body, are banished from the presence of God and His holy angels, for ever and ever to dwell in this state which is called Hell. The Bible reveals to man good and evil, exhorting him to cleave unto that which is good, warning him to shun the very appear-

ance of evil. It is revealed, that between these states, that is Heaven and Hell, there is a great gulf fixed which utterly prevents anyone from passing from one place to another. These are a few momentous matters revealed to man by the Christian Bible. Other books are as silent as the grave on these great truths. "Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever."



# THE NEW TESTAMENT,

WITH

## APOSTOLIC REFERENCES.

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The following is a sample:

# PARABLES AND FIGURES OF SPEECH.

RECORDED BY	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN
Axe laid root trees -----	iii. 10	-----	iii. 9	----
Whose fan in hand -----	iii. 12	-----	iii. 17	----
Ye are the salt -----	v. 13	-----	-----	----
Ye are the light -----	v. 14	-----	-----	----
Light a candle -----	v. 15	iv. 21	viii. 16	----
Let not left hand -----	vi. 13	-----	-----	----
Measure meet to others --	vii. 2	iv. 24	vi. 38	----
A well of living water ---	-----	-----	-----	iv. 14
I am the vine -----	-----	-----	-----	xv. 1

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